

May 21 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Finally, I wish to thank the thousands of Peace Corps volunteers who are serving our country around the world. At the end of this fiscal year, more volunteers will be serve overseas than at any time in the last 25 years. Our country owes you a debt of gratitude for your service.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

May 21, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 669, approved May 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-30.

Statement on Signing the 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act

May 21, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1141, the "1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act" providing the emergency resources I requested to support our mission in Kosovo, to assist the victims of Hurricane Mitch, and to provide relief to our farmers. I welcome the Congress support for our continuing military efforts in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This important supplemental appropriation to fund the continuation of our military operations sends a clear signal to the Milosevic regime that the Congress and people of the United States are committed to the NATO efforts in Operation Allied Force.

We and our allies have been very clear about what Milosevic must do. The refugees must go home, with security and self government. For that to happen, Serbian forces must leave Kosovo and an international security force with NATO at its core must deploy to protect innocent people of every ethnicity and faith.

By providing the resources I requested for the Department of Defense, this bill will keep our military readiness strong. At the same time it includes resources critical to helping the international community and the frontline countries of Southeast Europe to cope with the massive humanitarian crisis and other immediate spill-over effects of the conflict and Milosevic's brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing.

This emergency funding package will also provide urgently needed resources to help Central Americans repair and rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. With these funds, farmers can plant new crops in the final weeks of the growing season; roads, hospitals, and schools can be rebuilt; and Central Americans

can look to the future with hope, knowing that America is standing with them. The legislation will support the improving prospects for peace in the Middle East by providing additional assistance to strengthen Jordan's economy and security. The bill also provides resources for victims of natural disasters at home and for our farmers in distress due to depressed crop prices.

I am pleased that the bill repeals a provision of law that had threatened to interrupt funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, and other agencies. In addition to removing this funding restriction, the bill provides the added resources needed to continue preparations for a decennial census. My Administration will work with the Congress to ensure that next year the Census Bureau has the funding needed to conduct the most accurate census possible.

While I also am pleased that the Congress has finally acted to fund our mission in the Balkans, to support the Middle East peace process, and to help American farmers and the victims of Hurricane Mitch, it is unfortunate that members attached unnecessary and ill-advised special projects onto basic, essential emergency legislation. Were it not for pressing needs in Kosovo, Central America, the Middle East, and America's heartland, I would have rejected several of these measures that reward special interests, weaken environmental protection, and undermine our campaign to stop teen smoking. This is no way to do the people's business. The Congress should not permit, and I will not tolerate, special interest meddling as we complete the annual budget process.

This bill does show significant improvement over earlier versions. Gone are proposed cuts

that weakened anti-terrorism programs, especially embassy security upgrades; threatened to undermine global economic stability by denying U.S. funds to multi-lateral development banks; and imperiled the Government's ability to continue fixing its computers for the Year 2000. The Congress also removed or modified certain objectionable riders that, for example, would have blocked our efforts to protect the sensitive waters in Alaska's Glacier Bay and weakened the Endangered Species Act.

Congress should not have used this bill as a vehicle for a range of special interest provisions harmful to the environment and to the careful stewardship of our Nation's natural resources. Several highly objectionable provisions remain in the bill. For example, there are provisions that undermine our ability to ensure that mining on Federal lands is done in an environmentally responsible manner. And by extending a moratorium on the Department of the Interior's proposed oil valuation rules, the Congress is preventing the collection of fair royalty payments from the oil companies that extract oil from public lands. I want to be clear that were it not for the truly emergency needs to which this bill responds, I would reject these environmental riders. I call on the Congress to end these stealth attempts to weaken environmental and public health protections. I have vetoed bills in the past because they contained anti-environmental riders and, if necessary, I am fully prepared to do so again.

I am extremely disappointed that the Congress failed to require States to use even a portion of the funds collected from the tobacco companies to prevent youth smoking. Even though 3,000 young people become regular smokers every day and 1,000 will have their lives cut short as a result, most States still have no plans to use tobacco settlement funds to reduce youth smoking. This bill represents a

missed opportunity by the Congress to protect our children from the death and disease caused by tobacco. This is wrong. I will closely monitor State efforts in this area, and I will continue to fight for a nationwide effort to reduce youth smoking through counteradvertising, prevention activities, and restrictions on youth access to tobacco products.

I hereby designate the following amounts as emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended:

Department of Defense

- Military Personnel, Reserve Personnel, Army: \$2,900,000
- Military Personnel, National Guard Personnel, Army: \$6,000,000
- Military Personnel, National Guard Personnel, Air Force: \$1,000,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance, Army: \$50,000,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance, Navy: \$13,900,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps: \$300,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance, Air Force: \$8,800,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide: \$21,000,000
- Operation and Maintenance, Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid: \$37,500,000

Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Disaster Relief: \$372,000,000

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 21, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1141, approved May 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-31.